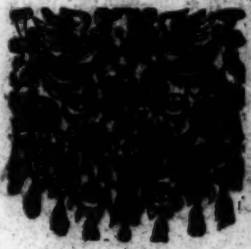
THE KINGS MAIESTIES *Declaration to His* Subiects, *CONCERNING* lawfull Sports to be vsed.



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M.DC.XVIII.

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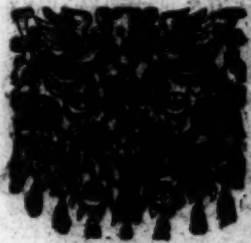

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M.DC.XVIII.

THE KINGS
MAIESTIES

Declaration to His

Subiects,

LONDON

Printed by Bonham Norton,

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for the Kings most Excellent

Maiestie.

M.DC.XVIII.

By the King.

WHereas vpon Our *returne the laſt yeere out of Scotland, Wee did publiſh Our pleaſure touching the recreations of Our people in thoſe parts vnder Our hand: For ſome cauſes Vs thereunto mooving, We haue thought good to command theſe Our directions then giuen in* Lancaſhire *with a few words thereunto added, and moſt appliable to theſe parts of Our Realmes, to be publiſhed to all Our Subiects.*

Whereas We did iuſtly in Our *Progreſſe through* Lancaſhire, *re-*

buke ſome Puritanes & preciſe people, and tooke order that the like vnlawfull cariage ſhould not bee vſed by any of them hereafter, in the prohibiting and vnlawfull puniſhing of Our good people for vſing their lawfull Recreations, and honeſt exerciſes vpon Sundayes and other Holy dayes, after the afternoone Sermon or Seruice: Wee now find that two ſorts of people wherewith that Countrey is much infeſted, (Wee meane Papiſts and Puritanes) haue maliciouſly traduced and calumniated thoſe Our iuſt and honourable proceedings. And therefore leſt Our reputation might vpon the one ſide (though innocently) haue ſome aſperſion layd vpon it, and that vpon the other part Our good people in that Countrey bee miſled by the miſtaking and miſinterpretation of Our meaning: We

haue

haue therefore thought good hereby to cleare and make Our pleasure to bee manifested to all Our good People in those parts.

It is true that at Our first entry to this Crowne, and Kingdome, Wee were informed, and that too truely, that Our County of Lancashire abounded more in Popish Recusants then any Countie of England, and thus hath stil continued since to Our great regreet, with litle amendment, saue that now of late, in Our last riding through Our said County, Wee find both by the report of the Iudges, and of the Bishop of that diocesse that there is some amendment now daily beginning, which is no small contentment to Us.

The report of this growing amendment amongst them, made Us the more sory, when with Our owne Eares Wee heard

heard the generall complaint of Our people, that they were barred from all lawfull Recreation, and exercise vpon the Sundayes afternoone, after the ending of all Diuine Seruice, which cannot but produce two euils: The one, the hindering of the conuersion of many, whom their Priests will take occasion hereby to vexe, perswading them that no honest mirth or recreation is lawfull or tollerable in Our Religion, which cannot but breed a great discontentment in Our peoples hearts, especially of such as are peraduenture vpon the point of turning. The other inconuenience is, that this prohibition barreth the common and meaner sort of people from vsing such exercises as may make their bodies more able for Warre, when Wee or Our Successors shall haue occasion to vse them. And in place

thereof

thereof ſets vp filthy tiplings and drunkenneſſe, and breeds a number of idle and diſcontented ſpeaches in their Alehouſes. For when ſhal the common people haue leaue to exerciſe, if not vpon the Sundayes and Holydayes, ſeeing they muſt apply their labour, and winne their liuing in all working dayes?

Our *expreſſe pleaſure therefore is, that the Lawes of Our Kingdome, and Canons of Our Church bee aſwell obſerued in that County, as in all other places of this Our Kingdome. And on the other part, that no lawfull Recreation ſhall bee barred to Our good People, which ſhall not tend to the breach of Our aforeſaid Lawes, and Canons of Our Church: which to expreſſe more particularly, Our pleaſure is, That the Biſhop, and all other inferiour Churchmen, and Churchwar-*

dens, shall for their parts bee carefull and diligent, both to instruct the ignorant, and cõuince & reforme them that are misled in religion, presenting them that will not conforme themselues, but obstinately stand out to Our Iudges and Iustices: Whom We likewise command to put the Law in due execution against them.

Our pleasure likewise is, That the Bishop of that Dioceſſe take the like straight order with all the Puritans and Precisians within the same, either constraining them to conforme themselues, or to leaue the Countrey according to the Lawes of Our Kingdome, and Canons of Our Church, and so to strike equally on both hands, against the contemners of Our Authoritie, and aduersaries of Our Church. And as for Our good peoples lawfull Recreation,

Our

Our pleaſure likewiſe is, That after the end of Diuine Seruice, Our good people be not diſturbed, letted, or diſcouraged from any lawfull Recreation; Such as dauncing, either men or women, Archerie for men, leaping, vaulting, or any other ſuch harmeleſſe Recreation, nor from hauing of May-Games, Whitſon Ales, and Morris-dances, and the ſetting vp of May-poles and other ſports therewith vſed, ſo as the ſame be had in due and conuenient time, without impediment or neglect of diuine Seruice: And that women ſhall haue leaue to carry ruſhes to the Church for the decoring of it, according to their old cuſtome. But withall We doe here accompt ſtill as prohibited all vnlawfull games to bee vſed vpon Sundayes onely, as Beare and Bull-baitings, Interludes, and at all times in

the meaner ſort of People by Law prohibited, Bowling.

And likewiſe Wee barre from this benefite and libertie, all ſuch knowne Recuſants, either men or Women, as will abſtaine from comming to Church or diuine Seruice, being therefore vnworthy of any lawfull recreation after the ſaid Seruice, that will not firſt come to the Church and ſerue GOD : *Prohibiting in like ſort the ſaid Recreations to any that, though cõforme in Religion, are not preſent in the Church at the Seruice of* GOD, *before their going to the ſaid Recreations.* Our *pleaſure likewiſe is, That they to whom it belongeth in Office, ſhall preſent and ſharply puniſh all ſuch as in abuſe of this Our libertie, will vſe theſe exerciſes before the ends of all diuine Seruices for that day. And We likewiſe ſtraightly com-*

command, that euery perſon ſhall reſort to his owne Pariſh Church to heare diuine Seruice, and each Pariſh by it ſelfe to vſe the ſaid Recreation after diuine Seruice. Prohibiting likewiſe any Offenſiue weapons to be caried or vſed in the ſaid times of Recreations And Our pleaſure is, That this Our Declaration ſhalbe publiſhed by order frō the Biſhop of the Dioceſſe, through all the Pariſh Churches, and that both Our Iudges of Our Circuit, and Our Iuſtices of Our Peace be informed thereof.

Giuen at Our Mannour of Greenwich the foure and twentieth day of May, in the ſixteenth yeere of Our Raigne of England, France and Ireland, and of Scotland the one and fiftieth.

God ſaue the King.